General Assembly

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Agenda item 32

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/62/404)*]

62/104. Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 212 (III) of 19 November 1948, 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 and all subsequent related resolutions, including its resolution 61/114 of 14 December 2006,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions,

Having considered the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2006,[1]

Taking note of the letter dated 17 June 2007 from the Chairperson of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East addressed to the Commissioner-General,[2]

Deeply concerned about the critical financial situation of the Agency, as well as about the rising expenditures of the Agency resulting from the deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions in the region and their significant negative impact on the provision of necessary Agency services to the Palestine refugees, including its emergency-related and development programmes,

Recalling Articles 100, 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations,[3]

Recalling also the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel,[4]

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 13* (A/62/13); and ibid., *Supplement No. 13A* (A/62/13/Add.1).

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 13* (A/62/13), p. ix.

[3] Resolution 22 A (I).

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2051, No. 35457.

Affirming the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,[5] to the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Aware of the continuing needs of the Palestine refugees throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the other fields of operation, namely Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic,

Gravely concerned about the extremely difficult living conditions being faced by the Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, resulting, inter alia, from the loss of life and injury, the extensive destruction of their shelters, properties and vital infrastructure, the displacement of the Palestine refugees, the prolonged closures and socio-economic decline,

Aware of the extraordinary efforts being undertaken by the Agency for the repair or rebuilding of thousands of damaged or destroyed refugee shelters and for the provision of shelter and emergency aid for those refugee families internally displaced as a result of Israeli military actions, as well as for those refugees affected and displaced by the recent crisis in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in northern Lebanon,

Aware also of the valuable work done by the Agency in providing protection to the Palestinian people, in particular Palestine refugees,

Gravely concerned about the endangerment of the safety of the Agency's staff and about the damage caused to the facilities of the Agency as a result of Israeli military operations during the reporting period,

Deploring the killing of fourteen Agency staff members by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since September 2000 and of one Agency staff member by the Israeli air force in Lebanon in August 2006,

Also deploring the killing and wounding of refugee children, including in the Agency's schools, by the Israeli occupying forces,

Expressing deep concern about the policies of closure and severe restrictions that continue to be imposed on the movement of persons and goods and the continued construction of the wall, contrary to international law, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which have gravely impacted the socio-economic situation of the Palestine refugees and have greatly contributed to the dire humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people,

Deeply concerned about the continuing imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement and access of the Agency's staff, vehicles and goods, and the harassment and intimidation of the Agency's staff, which undermine and obstruct the work of the Agency, including its ability to provide its essential basic and emergency services,

Recalling the signing, on 13 September 1993, of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization[6] and the subsequent implementation agreements,

Aware of the agreement between the Agency and the Government of Israel,

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[5] Ibid., vol. 75, No. 973.

[6] A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

Taking note of the agreement reached on 24 June 1994, embodied in an exchange of letters between the Agency and the Palestine Liberation Organization,[7]

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as to all of the staff of the Agency, for their tireless efforts and valuable work, particularly in the light of the difficult conditions during the past year;

2. *Also expresses its appreciation* to the Advisory Commission of the Agency, and requests it to continue its efforts and to keep the General Assembly informed of its activities;

3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East[8] and its efforts to assist in ensuring the financial security of the Agency, and requests the Secretary-General to provide the necessary services and assistance to the Working Group for the conduct of its work;

4. *Commends* the continuing efforts of the Commissioner-General to increase the budgetary transparency and efficiency of the Agency, as reflected in the Agency's programme budget for the biennium 2008–2009,[9] and the organizational reform measures being undertaken to modernize and strengthen the Agency's management and its ability to address the needs of the Palestine refugees;

5. *Endorses*, meanwhile, the efforts of the Commissioner-General to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis, and as a temporary measure, to persons in the area who are internally displaced and in serious need of continued assistance as a result of recent incursions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and hostilities in Lebanon;

6. *Acknowledges* the important support provided by the host Governments to the Agency in the discharge of its duties;

7. *Encourages* the Agency to make further progress in addressing the needs and rights of children in its operations in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child;[10]

8. *Also encourages* the Agency to also make further progress in addressing the needs and rights of women in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;[11]

9. *Expresses concern* about the temporary relocation of the international staff of the Agency from its headquarters in Gaza City and the disruption of operations at the headquarters due to the deterioration and instability of the situation on the ground;

10. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply fully with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;

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[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 13* (A/49/13), annex I.

[8] A/62/361.

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 13A* (A/62/13/Add.1).

[10] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[11] Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

11. *Also calls upon* Israel to abide by Articles 100, 104 and 105 of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations in order to ensure the safety of the personnel of the Agency, the protection of its institutions and the safeguarding of the security of its facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

12. *Urges* the Government of Israel to speedily compensate the Agency for damage to its property and facilities resulting from actions by the Israeli side and to expeditiously reimburse the Agency for all transit charges incurred and other financial losses sustained by the Agency as a result of delays and restrictions on movement and access imposed by Israel;

13. *Calls upon* Israel particularly to cease obstructing the movement and access of the staff, vehicles and supplies of the Agency and to cease the levying of extra fees and charges, which affect the Agency's operations detrimentally;

14. *Requests* the Commissioner-General to proceed with the issuance of identification cards for Palestine refugees and their descendants in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

15. *Affirms* that the functioning of the Agency remains essential in all the fields of operation;

16. *Notes* the success of the Agency's microfinance and microenterprise programmes, and calls upon the Agency, in close cooperation with the relevant agencies, to continue to contribute to the development of the economic and social stability of the Palestine refugees in all the fields of operation;

17. *Reiterates its request* to the Commissioner-General to proceed with the modernization of the archives of the Agency through the Palestine Refugee Records Project, and to indicate progress in her report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session;

18. *Reiterates its previous appeals* to all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to continue and to augment the special allocations for grants and scholarships for higher education to Palestine refugees in addition to their contributions to the regular budget of the Agency and to contribute to the establishment of vocational training centres for Palestine refugees, and requests the Agency to act as the recipient and trustee for the special allocations for grants and scholarships;

19. *Urges* all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to continue and to increase their contributions to the Agency so as to ease the ongoing financial constraints, exacerbated by the current humanitarian situation on the ground that has resulted in rising expenditures, in particular with regard to emergency services, and to support the Agency's valuable and necessary work in assisting the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation.

75th plenary meeting
17 December 2007